The Flower of the Gorse

By Louis Tracy

(Continued from last Sunday.)

CHAPTER XIV.

A BRETON RECKONING.

RAYMOND squirmed, but signed the confession. Tollemache forced the belief that he was in deadly earnest. The blackmailer had either to accept the proffered terms or concoct schemes of reprisal in a cell. At the last moment Mrs. Carmac intervened.

"I know what it means to be tempted, and to yield," she said sadly, realizing now that her own somewhat checkered record was not hidden from any one in that room. "You, Mr. Raymond, have only yourself to blame for your misfortunes. Even your physical injury is the direct outcome of an attempt to steal the few trinkets I prize. But I would never forgive myself if I turned you out in the world penniless and suffering. Please tell me the truth. Have you any money?"

"Very little," came the sullen answer. "I have spent a good deal during the last few days."

"But how?" she cried, genuinely surprised. "You are under no expense here."

"Since candor is in the air, I may as well acquaint you with the facts," said Raymond bitterly. "You blurted out your own secret, and I thought I saw a way of improving my position. I should have won, too, if it were not for a piece of cursed ill luck in the finding of those boxes. I employed Duquesne to ferret out your early history in Paris. If I disappear, you had better pay him well, or he may take it into his head to go to Rupert Fosdyke with the story. Of course, I don't expect you to place much credence in anything I say; but mere common sense should show you that the only safe course is to send me to Paris with sufficient means to secure Duquesne's silence. That is a fair offer. Take it or leave it, as you will. Let me point out, however, that the Madeleine Demoret affair supplies a reasonable excuse for my journey, and if you are as generous as you can afford to be I promise to devote myself wholly to the task of diverting any suspicions Duquesne may have formed as to the motive behind my previous instructions."

Tollemache, with a wisdom beyond his years, seemed to know when to strike and when to hold his hand. Raymond's suggestion was eminently reasonable. The evil spirit that had raised all this commotion could best allay it.

"Come, Yvonne," he said. "Let us leave Mrs. Carmac to determine this matter as she thinks fit. I offer no opinion. Mrs. Carmac has not compounded a felony—that responsibility rests with me—and, if she chooses to employ Raymond in a personal undertaking, I cannot interfere. He knows the penalty if she is troubled by any future act of his. I'll hunt him around the globe!"

Yvonne never knew what terms her mother made with Raymond. That they did not err on the side of parsimony may be taken for granted. Long after the tornado that swept through Pont Aven that Christmastide was forgotten by all save a few, the ex-secretary was able to buy a share in an automobile agency.

Lorry was hugely amused as the two descended the stairs. "Socrates believes there isn't any guile in my composition," he grinned. "I wonder what he'll say when he reads the screed to which that beauty has just put his left-handed signature?"

"Dad will agree with me that you carried a very difficult matter through with great skill, Lorry," said Yvonne.

"But the joke is that if Raymond stuck to his guns I was done for. Who cares tuppence whether a skunk like him goes to prison or not? Not a soul! But the whole press of Europe would stand up on its hind legs and roar if the Carmac millions were thrown into the melting pot of the law courts. Don't you see, Yvonne, I had to rush Raymond off his feet? I've broken about twenty statutes made and provided. If he had showed one-quarter the nerve in that room which he displayed when Stella was drifting on to the reef he could have laughed at me."

"For all that, Lorry, you were very clever, and I think you're a dear," said Yvonne, quietly.

Neither her father nor her lover should ever be told now of the sordid compact that Raymond had put before her during that memorable walk by the side of the Aven. She would simply erase the hateful record from her mind; but she could not close her eyes to the certain fact that Raymond's daring project had shrivelled into nothingness because he saw that, no matter what the consequences, Mrs. Carmac's daughter would never marry a common thief. That phase had passed like the stupor of a nightmare. The vital problem presented by her mother's future remained insoluble as ever.

In the crowded place they met Peridot. There was no chance of avoiding him: he had seen them leaving the annex. Before they could join Popple and Jackson beneath the sycamores the fisherman barred the way, cap in hand.

"Pardon, Ma'mselle," he said, speaking with a civility that hardly masked a note of defiance, "have you any news of Madeleine?"

"Nothing definite, nothing reliable," she answered, striving valiantly to convey the impression that the mystery of Madeleine's whereabouts would soon be cleared up satisfactorily.

"Nothing that you would care to tell, Ma'mselle—is that it?"

"No, Peridot. Madeleine said she was going to Quimperlé; but I have heard that she is in Paris. That is all I know—probably all that any one in Pont Aven knows."

She had flushed under the fisherman's penetrating, scornful gaze; not because of the effort to conceal a scanty budget concerning her wilful friend's flight, but out of sheer sympathy with the man, whom she knew to be consumed with wrath and shame.

"Then I shall be justified in killing any man who calls her a strumpet?" went on Peridot, icily. He had used a Breton word which Tollemache did not understand; but Yvonne's gasp of horror was eloquent, and Lorry came to the rescue.

"You must have taken leave of your senses, Peridot, to address Mademoiselle Yvonne in that manner," he said.

The fisherman spat, an unprecedented thing. "Gars!" he growled. "Taken leave of my senses, have I? I'd like to see you if your girl had bolted with the first well-dressed dandy who made eyes at her. Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar, they say. Scratch Monsieur Tollemache and you might find—Peridot."

With that he left them, swaggering off among the throng of peasants as though he had not a care in the world. Yvonne's troubled glance followed him. Here was a new Peridot, a man out of whose life was fled the light-hearted gayety and spirit of good fellowship that had made him so popular in the village. No sooner, it would seem, was one cloud dispelled than another gathered. Yvonne shuddered with foreboding; for in those gray-green eyes she had seen the lurid light of a volcano.

During some days peace reigned in that small circle of a small community with which this chronicle has dealt so intimately. Mrs. Carmac did not hurry her departure. She promised Yvonne that on arriving in London she would consult Bennett as to her exact position. She neither affirmed nor denied that Walter Carmac had renewed his American citizenship. Ingersoll, when the girl brought a faithful record of the discussion between her mother and herself, drew the only reasonable inference—that no steps had been taken in that direction. The knowledge was disheartening. Not without cause did he say to Tollemache that he had fathomed his wife's nature to the depths. Were it possible for her to end her days in real communion with the husband and child she had forsaken deliberately, she would gladly have renounced wealth and social position. As it was, she meant to cling fiercely to the bulk of her possessions, thinking that thereby she would have a stronger hold on Yvonne, since she hoped to draw the girl nearer by the lure that money alone could spread so enticingly.

Undoubtedly she had it in mind to provide ample revenues for the Fosdyke family, with guarantees of large interests in the estate at her death, and thus close the only source that threatened discredit and loss. But this was the half measure that so often spells disaster. Its outcome lay in the lap of the gods, and the gods were frowning on her.

Meanwhile, she lingered on in Pont Aven. The equable climate suited her health, she claimed. She dreaded the formalities with regard to the succession, and wanted to leave all such disagreeable details to the lawyers. Until Madeleine Demoret's affair was settled she wished to remain within call of Paris. These were excuses. They deceived none, Yvonne least of any. The girl's affection never wavered for an instant when the interests of father and mother were at war. Her father could not be at ease until the woman who had broken his life was far from the village, and the daughter was on pins and needles of anxiety that the mother should depart.

Raymond—suddenly reverted to type, become once more the discreet, unobtrusive secretary—reported that Madeleine and Fosdyke seemed to have quarrelled. He had visited the girl, and found her uncommunicative and rebellious. Fosdyke had gone to England. He supplied Madeleine's address, and Yvonne wrote, in friendly and sympathetic strain, asking for news of her welfare. By this time Ingersoll had advised the cessation of any effort to persuade her to return. It was not in human nature to expect the girl to endure the slights that would inevitably attend her reappearance. To her Pont Aven must henceforth be a sealed Paradise. If ever she saw the place again she would tread its familiar ways a stranger and unregarded.

At last came a letter from Madeleine herself. Its tone was honest and very much to the point. She had imagined that Rupert Fosdyke meant marriage. When she was disillusioned she spurned him, and had obtained a situation as a nurse, her country speech and Breton costume being passports to ready employment. It was better so. Paris takes a more lenient view of certain aspects of life than Pont Aven.

Singularly enough, during those days no word of love was spoken between Tollemache and Yvonne. The mine was laid, and the smallest spark would fire it; but the spark was not forthcoming, and for the excellent reason that Lorry wished Mrs. Carmac and her millions far away before he asked Yvonne to marry him. If, in some distant time, the girl's mother insisted on enriching her, it would be difficult to defeat her intent. But it was Yvonne he wanted, not Mrs. Carmac's money. He was more attached to Ingersoll than to his own father, a narrow-minded Philistine who had cut himself adrift from a son because the ingrate preferred art to money spinning.

If once he and Yvonne were wed Mrs. Carmac's ambitious schemes in behalf of her beautiful "niece" would go by the board. Circumstances had made it impossible that father and mother should meet, even at their daughter's wedding—and where could such a marriage take place but in Pont Aven, and who should spread the wedding feast but Mère Pitou?

So Lorry bided his time; though Yvonne read him like a book, and the acknowledge that her mother's continued residence in the village alone prevented Lorry from taking her in a bearlike grip and telling her that she was the one woman he had ever loved, or ever would love, gave active reinforcement to her anxiety concerning her father, whose wellbeing, she was convinced, depended on the prompt and complete restoration of life to its normal plane.

Thus, when preparations were being made by Mère Pitou for the Réveillon—that cheerful feast which enlivens the midnight of Christmas—Yvonne did not hesitate to tell her mother that on that occasion at least they would see little of each other, and perhaps less in the immediate future, as she was going with her father to Concarneau.

Mrs. Carmac took the hint gracefully. As a preliminary she sent Captain Popple and Jackson to England; the one to become a sort of factotum in her Surrey house, the other to join the staff in her Charles Street residence.

"Ask your father, as a last concession, to allow you to travel with me as far as St. Malo when I leave on the twenty-sixth," she said. "It will be a long weary journey otherwise. Have you a friend who can accompany you? You would need to stay one night in St. Malo and return here next day."

Ingersoll did not demur. It was arranged that Barbe should go with Yvonne; so one heart, at least, rejoiced, since the mere prospect of such an outing brought untold joy to a little maid who regarded St. Malo as a place so unutterably remote that it figured in her mind only as a geographical expression, somewhat akin to Timbuktu and the North Cape of Lapland.

Yvonne left her mother about 4 o'clock on Christmas Eve. Tollemache was waiting for her, and together they strolled to the cottage. There was much to be done, because Mère Pitou expected a large party. Peridot, though specially invited, had refused to come. Indeed, his manner was so gruff that Barbe, who acted as messenger, was moved to tears while relating the reception accorded her.

"Teha!" snorted her mother. "That's a man's way all over. When a woman gives him the slip he'll sulk and paw the ground like an angry bull for a week or so. Then he'll drown his sorrows in cognac, and at the next Pardon you'll see him squaring up to some pretty girl as if the other one had never existed. What about that sardine boat which the American lady promised him? That should widen his mouth when it reaches the quay."

Mère Pitou never alluded to Mrs. Carmac by name. To a Frenchwoman the word presented no difficulty; but, owing to some whim, Yvonne's "aunt" was "the American lady," and was never promoted to greater intimacy of description in the old woman's speech.

"The vessel is ordered in Concarneau," said Yvonne. "With complete equipment it is to cost 5,000 francs. Mrs. Carmac has also given another 5,000 francs to the notary to be invested for Peridot, who is well aware of both gifts, but has neither called nor written to express his thanks."

"The worm!" cried madame. "Peridot, indeed! He ought to be christened Asticot!"

As an asticot is a maggot, it was well that none but Yvonne had overheard Mère Pitou's biting comment, or the fisherman's new nickname might have stuck, its point being specially appreciable in a fishing community.

The weather that night was peculiarly calm and mild, even for Southern Brittany. Shortly after midnight Ingersoll, who had been watching Yvonne and Tollemache dancing the gavotte, in which the girl was an adept and her lover a sufficiently skilful partner to show off her graceful steps to the utmost advantage, suddenly decided to smoke a cigar in the open air.

He quitted the studio by a French window and strolled into the garden, which stretched some little way up the steep slope of the hill, and through a narrow strip toward the road on one side of the cottage. Owing to the feast, Pont Aven was by no means asleep; but the streets were empty, as the people were either entertaining or being entertained. In a house near the church a girl was singing the "Adeste fideles" in a high, pure treble. Those in her company, men, women and children, burst into the harmonious chorus, "Venite adoremus; venite adoremus in Bethlehem." As the appeal swelled and then died away and the girl's voice took up the solo Ingersoll remembered the verse, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God," and his eyes grew dim with unshed tears.

The hymn ceased. From some more distant gathering came the strumming of a banjo in the latest Boulevard refrain. Ingersoll smiled at that. Not often might any man hear twenty centuries summed up so concisely. He was about to re-enter the cottage when a woman, hatless, but with head and face veiled in a shawl of black lace, appeared indistinctly in the roadway. He knew instantly that it was his wife. Only two women in Pont Aven walked with such ease and elegance, and they were Yvonne and her mother.

A second later he heard the familiar creak of the garden gate. So she was coming in! He was utterly at a loss to account for this amazing intrusion. He had counted implicitly on his wife's sense of good breeding and fairness restraining her from any frenzied effort to undo the havoc of the past, and a spasm of anger shook him now because of this threatened invasion of his small domain. At any rate she should not have the hysterical satisfaction of placing him in a false position before Mère Pitou and her guests, to say nothing of Yvonne and Tollemache.

He retreated into the deep shadow of a lofty retaining wall, whence he could see without being seen. If, as he expected, there was a commotion among the dancers when the unexpected visitor was announced, he would escape by way of the open hillside, and remain away during some hours. Then, in the morning, Yvonne and he would end an intolerable state of things by leaving Pont Aven for some unknown refuge until Lorry told them that the coast was clear.

Thus do men plan when beset by some unforeseen difficulty. Be they wise or foolish, they seldom learn that in those crucial moments of life when events of real importance take place they are as straws caught in a whirlpool, and no more capable than straws of predetermined governance of their deeds and movements.

Ingersoll was barely hidden before he received a fresh surprise. His wife had not gone to the door. She was in the garden, and coming round to the back, evidently meaning to look in on the revellers and remain unseen. She halted but a few paces short of the place where Ingersoll was standing, and soon he knew that she was crying in a heartbroken way. Her very attitude, the care she took to restrain the sounds of her grief and not become visible to any eye that chanced to look out through the open window, showed that she was in the depths of despair. By a rapid revulsion of feeling the man's heart ached for her. Strive as he might, and strong as were the dictates of the social laws that closed and bolted the door of reconciliation, he was tempted, or it may be divinely inspired, to make known his presence and utter words of healing and forgiveness.

But the opportunity, no less than the impulse, passed as quickly as it had risen.

The dancing had stopped. Evidently in response to some question of Yvonne's, Tollemache came to the window and peered out.

"Ingersoll!" he cried.

There was no answer. The artist could not be detected in any event, and the change from a well lighted room to the external darkness temporarily blinded Lorry's sharp eyes, or he might have noted the slight, shrinking figure beneath one of the apple trees.

"He's not there," he said, speaking over his shoulder to Yvonne.

The girl came nearer. "I saw him go out," she persisted.

"Yes, of course. I saw him, too. He stopped to light a cigar. Bet you he's gone for a stroll. You remember last year at this time he went to Julia's for half an hour."

That was an unfortunate recollection on Lorry's part. He was aware of it instantly; but Yvonne helped to slur it over by saying that she had no doubt "Dad" would soon return. Then the two rejoined their Breton friends.

Mrs. Carmac clearly meant to take no further risk of discovery. She hurried away. After a momentary indecision Ingersoll followed. His action was inexplicable, even to himself. It arose, perhaps, from a desire to make certain that his wife reached the hotel. Such a motive was at least comprehensible. It came within the bounds of that intelligence which regulates ordinary human affairs. But there is another and subtler spirit essence which sends out through space its impalpable, invisible, yet compelling influences. Sometimes the storm-tossed soul makes silent appeal for help and finds response in some other heart whence aid is unsought and unsuspected.

Howsoever that may be, John Ingersoll followed his wife, and Pont Aven was soon in an uproar, when the news spread that while Monsieur Ingersoll was rescuing l'Americaine, Madame Carmac, from the waters of the harbor, Peridot, easy-going, devil-may-care Peridot, was battering Rupert Fosdyke into a hardly recognizable corpse on the open road near the hotel.

In a village rumor of that sort seldom lies. Both these sensational statements were true; though the one became widely known far more speedily than the other. In fact, Peridot's crime had witnesses. A party of villagers, coming down the Toulifot, heard voices raised in altercation. Then there were sounds of a scuffle, and a tall man was seen to fall, while a shorter man stooped over the prostrate body and struck blow after blow with an iron belaying pin.

The women screamed; the men ran forward to seize the would-be murderer. He offered no resistance, but said calmly:

"When one meets a viper one batters its head. It is the only safe thing to do, eh?"

He seemed to find comfort in the thought. He repeated it many times, in one form or another. When the police came, and a sergeant who happened to be a great friend of his had the miserable task of arresting him and charging him with murder—for Rupert Fosdyke was dead; would have died under any one of those half-dozen fiercely vindictive blows—Peridot was quite cheerful.

"Cré nom!" he cried. "It is not often one finds a snake hereabouts at Christmas time. This one made a mistake. It shouldn't have come to Pont Aven, where we wear stout sabots!"

Then he broke gaily into one of Albert Larrieu's Breton songs::

"Toc! toc! toc! toc!
C'est à Concarneau
Qu'on voit de belles filles,
Prestes et gentilles,
Dans leur petits sabots!"

"Shut up, Peridot, for the sake of the good God!" muttered his friend. "Come, man! There's your mother looking out. She heard your voice!"

"Is that you, Jean Jacques?" came a shrill cry from a bent figure etched in the lighted rectangle of an open door in a cottage higher up the hill. "Time you were home and in bed!"

"Don't worry, mother, I'm in good company," he shouted. "Here is the law on one side of me, and a dead viper on the other! I'll go straight to-night, never fear!"

Mère Larraidou saw her son walk off down the hill with his friend the sergeant. In pity the men who were lifting a corpse desisted from their grewsome labor till the door was closed again.

When Ingersoll carried the body of an insensible and half-drowned woman into Mère Pitou's there was a rare stir.

By chance the lesser tragedy which took place in the river beneath the line of dwarfed oaks had passed unnoticed by the villagers. Greatly wondering, and wholly at a loss to account for his wife's behavior, the artist had followed her into the main road, and kept her under close observation when she failed to cross the bridge and hurried along the narrow street leading to the harbor.

Once clear of the last mill he could watch her from a greater distance, because the valley widens with the stream and the hills are neither so high nor so precipitous. On and on she went, past Madame Maréchale's café, past the triangular grass plot where roundabouts and swings and canvas theatres stand in the summer, past the jolly little Hotel Terminus, and along the picturesque Chemin du Hallage, which is not a carriage road, but a pleasant footpath, bordered on the one hand by pretty villas and on the other by the tidal stream, with here and there beneath the stunted trees a rustic seat overlooking the water.

At such an hour, long after midnight, the last pollard oak marks the Ultima Thule of Pont Aven. The nearest house in front is nearly a mile away, and reached only by a narrow track through the gorse.

Some vague terror caused Ingersoll to quicken his pace and a few seconds later to break into a run. Perhaps his wife heard him, and, fearing interference, made up her mind to delay the great adventure not a moment longer. Uttering a wailing cry, she threw herself into the water. The tide was falling, and as the main stream travels close to the right bank at that point she was swept away as though some giant hand were waiting to clutch her.

Commending his soul to Heaven, Ingersoll raced ahead to a rocky plateau which, although submerged now, drove a broad and fairly level causeway far into the centre of the river. He was just in time. He saw a white face, a hand, whirling in the current. Plunging in, he grasped desperately at the place where he judged the body might be. Then began a fight, a life and death struggle against a relentless, overwhelming force. Yet somehow he conquered, and found himself with a limp body in his arms wading knee deep in a tract of mud and slime.

Though slightly built and frail looking, and, owing to the worry and confinement of his recent life, rather out of condition, once he regained his breath he made light of carrying his wife to the cottage.

He could not tell why he brought her there rather than to the hotel. He remembered afterward giving the matter some thought; but he was either deterred by the sight of so many people in the Place—brought thither by the affrighting news of the murder—or by the notion that a further scandal might be averted if the unhappy woman were tended by those whom he and she could trust. None of Mère Pitou's guests knew that Mrs. Carmac had been rescued from the estuary. They thought she had mistaken some byway and fallen into the Aven, a quite possible accident to a stranger on a dark night.

So a second time Yvonne stripped her mother's slender form of its water-soaked garments, while Mère Pitou loudly invoked the aid and commiseration of various saints—but did not forget to fill hot water bottles and wrap them in flannel before applying them to the unconscious woman's benumbed body and feet. Dr. Garnier came, and shook his head, muttering of "shock" and "derangement of the nervous system," and in the midst of all this turmoil and furtive fear of the worst consequences arrived Celeste, searching for her mistress, and almost incoherent with her story of Rupert Fosdyke's fate. He had arrived in the village by the half-past four train that afternoon, and after a long talk with madame had dined alone. She was told that he went out shortly before midnight and met Peridot and was straightway beaten to death.

After some hours of horrible uncertainty Mrs. Carmac recovered sufficiently to speak.

"Where am I? she muttered, staring about wildly.

"At home, dear, with me," whispered Yvonne.

The dazed eyes slowly gathered consciousness of Yvonne's presence. "Who took me out of the river?" she went on.

"The man who has loved you all his life, dear," said the girl softly. She had the fixed belief now that her mother would surely die and was resolved that her last hours should be made happy by knowledge of her husband's devotion.

"What! John saved me! Was it he who followed me?"

"Yes, dear. He risked his life for your sake and carried you here unaided."

"A good man," came the low murmur. "I was not worthy of him."

"Mother, you are to try and sleep now. The doctor's orders must be obeyed. Otherwise you will be very, very ill."

"I am sick unto death already, dear one. But I shall do as you bid—to please you—and John. One word! Tell him—tell him—that I am poorer than when I left him. Rupert is here. He gloated over my downfall. He knows everything and would hear of no terms. No, it is not Raymond's doing. I asked that. He met some man who knew us in the old days and who had read the account of the wreck. I am a pauper of sorts, Yvonne. Please ask your father not to turn me out."

"Mother," wailed the girl in a voice strangled with grief, "you must not talk like that! You'll break my heart!"

"Ah, 'tout passe, Yvonne, even broken hearts! You will be far happier in your cottage than ever I was in a mansion. Yes, I'll sleep—if only to please you—and John. Tell him I said that, will you?"

Next morning Ingersoll, who, thanks to the exertion demanded after the plunge into the river, was not one whit the worse for the wetting, sent the following telegram to Bennett:

"Rupert Fosdyke met his death last night and Mrs. Carmac was nearly drowned. Both events closely bound up with succession to Carmac estate. Probably you will understand. Can you come at once? INGERSOLL."

That afternoon came the reply:

"Profoundly distressed. Crossing to-night. Wire reports concerning Mrs. Carmac's health Southampton and St. Malo. BENNETT."

Yvonne wept with sheer gratitude when her father said that, with Dr. Garnier's permission, he would visit her mother. She had not dared to suggest it; but Ingersoll knew that his action had added one more link to the chain of love that bound his daughter and himself. Dr. Garnier, of course, was aware of no reason why the woman should not meet her rescuer, though he might have been startled had he seen the look of terror that darkened her eyes when she found her husband bending over her.

"Don't be afraid, Stella," said he. "I am not here to reproach you. Be content, and live! We want you to live, Yvonne and I."

"John, forgive," she murmured.

"I do forgive, Stella, as I hope to be forgiven!"

"John, how could I have left you?"

"That is all passed now—merged in the mists of long years. You will be made happy here. I mean what I say. You are in Yvonne's care and in mine, and always in God's. Believe that and you will soon be restored to health and to such happiness as life can bring."

She sobbed convulsively, and he called Yvonne in haste, thinking that perhaps he had done more harm than good. However, the invalid rallied after he had gone, and seemed to gain strength, though slowly. Next day she was racked by the first symptoms of pneumonia.

When Bennett arrived she was conscious and free from pain. He had not been seated by the bedside many minutes before he put a curious question.

"Do you feel able to sign a will?" he said.

She smiled wistfully. "Have you not been told?" she said. "I shall lose everything. My second marriage can be proved illegal."

"I am not quite sure of that. I only want you to pull through this present illness. But it is well to prepare against all eventualities. Would you wish to constitute your daughter your sole heiress?"

She was beyond the reach of surprise, and contented herself with a fervent yes.

"I have prepared the necessary documents. Listen, now, while I read," and the woman's weary, puzzled eyes dwelt on the lawyer's grave face as he recited the testamentary clause by which "Stella Ingersoll, otherwise known as Stella Carmac," left all her real and personal estate to "her daughter, Yvonne Ingersoll."

"Now we'll get witnesses, and remember that you sign your name Stella Ingersoll," said the lawyer with a cheerful and businesslike air. "Mr. Tollemache will be one witness, my clerk another and little Barbe Pitou a third; so you need not worry at all because of the change of signature."

Forthwith, in the presence of Lorry and Bennett's clerk and the scared Barbe, Mrs. Carmac signed her name in a way that was strangely familiar, though she had not seen it written that

Continued on seventh page.

Scriptural Sketches with Modern Applications

PSALM XXXVII.

35. I have seen the wicked
in great power
and spreading himself like
a green bay tree.

36. Yet he passed away, and lo,
he was not:
Yea I sought him but
he could not be found.